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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 000225

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: CY 2004 END USE MONITORING REPORT

REF: STATE 238640

1. Due to the signing of a Letter of Agreement (LOA) in late September, Argentina received INL INCLE funding for the first time in nine years. Post is actively working to subobligate this funding early in 2005. In 2004, Post provided USD \$1,430 for the maintenance of INL provided radio repeater equipment utilizing residual 1995 INL funding, and plans to reallocate all remaining prior year INL funding early in 2005. Post did not receive 2004 Andean Initiative Funding, but provided valuable equipment and training support utilizing prior year Andean Initiative Funds. In 2004, Post provided 11 vehicles worth USD \$114,747, computer equipment worth USD \$11,788, and x-ray slides and narcotics test kits worth USD \$3,426 to various GOA law enforcement agencies.

Procedures Used to Verify End-Use

2. Post's INL narcotics coordinator does not have PD&S funding and as such is unable to fund on-site inspections, or periodic spot checks to verify end use monitoring. The INL narcotics coordinator relies upon DEA Officers to assess appropriate usage of INL-funded equipment. Also, trusted Argentine law enforcement officials provide us with periodic updates on equipment usage when requested to do so. In addition, receiving agencies are requested to provide Post with a status report on INL-supplied equipment, although compliance continues to be sporadic at best. Short of receiving PD&S funding to enable the INL narcotics coordinator to personally conduct end use monitoring, this system of overlapping verification methods is the best possible end use appraisal system currently available

Status

3. The majority of the equipment and vehicles provided are located in the northern provinces of Salta and Jujuy, with some computer and communication equipment located with the successor unit for a defunct airport task force in Buenos Aires. All indications are that all provided equipment is being used for the intended purposes, no single case of inappropriate or unauthorized use has been reported in 2004. The majority of the items listed on the current end use monitoring list are old or aging computers, vehicles and radio equipment, much of which is near or well past its "useful life." A major priority for the INL narcotics coordinator in 2005 is the total overhaul of the end use monitoring system to eliminate items that have exceeded their "useful life." For example, Post's end use monitoring list contains vehicles purchased in 1989, and while DEA and GOA officials attest that all the vehicles are accounted for, a great many of them are inoperable. In general, the equipment provided through INL funding continues to be used, but with problems coming from advancing age and hard use. For example, radio transmitters provided to the Northern Border Task Force (NBTF) require routine maintenance and repair. We will also have to repair or replace numerous hand-held radios provided to federal and provincial police throughout Argentina because of wear and tear resulting from routine use under harsh operational and climatic conditions.

Problems

4. A lack of PD&S resources limits the INL narcotics coordinator's effectiveness in managing Post's INL account. With the signing of the LOA and the increased focus of the GOA on narcotics related issues, the INL program at Post has an opportunity to greatly improve the GOA's ability to combat drug trafficking. The INL narcotics coordinator has requested PD&S funding to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of provided equipment in order to consolidate the listing of equipment needing to be monitored, and to re-employ an EFN employee hired to conduct the end use monitoring program.

Impact of INL Program

5. While the INL-funded equipment program in Argentina has

been a small one, it continues to have a positive impact, especially on the perennially under-funded anti-drug units operating in northern provinces. The 11 undercover vehicles procured for various law enforcement agencies late in 2004 will greatly increase the operational effectiveness of GOA law enforcement and replace INL provided vehicles that are no longer in service. The equipment donated to the NBTF in Salta and Jujuy Provinces in 1998-2004 continues to be put to excellent use. In 2004, the NBTF was involved in the seizure of 691 kilograms of cocaine, and 59,910 kilograms of precursor chemicals. In addition, 139 traffickers were arrested by the task force. The two dogs provided to the NBTF some eight years ago are healthy and being properly cared for by their handlers. The original two have been joined by six more that were bred locally. The total force of eight dogs allows the handlers to maintain a rotation schedule that ensures the safe and efficient use of the animals. The new dogs and their trainers would benefit greatly from USG-provided training funded by INL.

16. Overall, our growing program gives us a valuable tool with which to pursue our joint counter-narcotics agenda with the GOA. The GOA is currently very focused on its security and narcotics problems, and they have turned to Post for advice and assistance in creating a national security plan. In coming years the INL program will be essential to the GOA's efforts both to combat its growing narcotics trafficking problem and establish better control over its border areas.
GUTIERREZ